

Dear Colleagues:

Elon has well-established and long-valued forums to address issues brought forth that impact faculty and staff. The university's Academic Council is a model of shared governance that ensures non-tenure-track and adjunct faculty are represented as voting members. The council is an avenue for all faculty, including those who are part time or not on a tenure track, to voice their concerns and advocate for their working conditions.

That is why yesterday many members of our community were surprised by a union action at Elon by organizers of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). We had heard reports that some outside members of the union were approaching faculty in hallways and at their homes, but we had no advance notice of a campus demonstration or their intention to file a union election petition with the National Labor Relations Board on Thursday.

At the heart of Elon's model of shared governance is the spirit of working together each year to advance working conditions for all faculty. In Academic Council, faculty members from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines come together to deliberate and advocate on matters impacting their colleagues. This is a body designed to give a voice and a vote to a variety of constituencies from Elon's faculty membership of nearly 600. The Academic Council, unlike the SEIU, does not ask its members to pay dues.

We continue to believe in the value of Elon's model of shared governance that offers a representative voice to the full range of our faculty. Deliberative dialogue is what we strive for as a community. Constructive conversations are a cornerstone to Elon's culture.

Over the next week, the university will provide information about our position on the SEIU labor union, in addition to a broader discussion with all faculty at the regularly scheduled faculty meeting on Friday, Dec. 7. More details about these meetings will follow.

Additionally, the president is evaluating the latitude to create a task force, which would be our normal response, to work in partnership with the Academic Council to ensure perpetuation of the open dialogue between and among our university family. To be clear, however, under federal law the university cannot make promises to change terms of employment once a labor union files a petition for election, so we must be cautious. But, you can rest assured that we will work together, as we have in the past, to ensure the needs of our community are met.

All the best,
Steven